

Detective Admits GM Instructions To Muzzle Nader

Auto Executives Lied at Hearing, Gillen Swears

By Morton Mintz
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The private detective hired to investigate auto industry critic Ralph Nader has now admitted that his instructions from a General Motors-retained lawyer were: "to get something somewhere on this guy . . . get him out of their hair . . . shut him up."

The investigator, Vincent Gillen, also has sworn that GM executives made false statements about the Nader case to a Senate subcommittee last May.

These explosive charges were made in three documents filed late Friday afternoon in New York State Supreme Court in Manhattan. They are part of Nader's \$26 million invasion of privacy suit against GM, Gillen, and two detective agencies.

The principal document lists 29 singled-spaced pages of new charges by Nader, and uncontested facts, asking each of the defendants to reply.

Instructions Taped

The second document contains Gillen's responses, including the disclosure that he had tape-recorded the instructions given him by Richard G. Danner, a Washington lawyer retained by GM to hire Gillen. Responses from General Motors and other defend-

ants have not yet been filed: General Motors referred all inquiries to Simon Rifkind, a New York lawyer handling the Nader case. Rifkind could not be reached.

The third document containing four exhibits, was filed by Nader's counsel in support of Nader's contention that GM gave doctored documents to Senator Abraham A. Ribicoff (D-Conn.), chairman of a subcommittee investigating harassment of Nader. It also contains a "Dear Dick" letter from a GM law librarian, Eileen Murphy, to Danner expressing disappointment with

See NADER, A5, Col. 1

the investigation of Nader to date.

"... everyone is going overboard to impress us with what a great, charming intellectual this human being is," she wrote, "... an Eagle Scout type. . . . One does not place 396 out of 462 in class and be a hot shot in everything. . . . What is his Army record? . . . What type of discharge did he receive? . . . Savings account, stocky?"

The letter closes: "Well, friend, have fun."

In his answers to Nader's questions, Gillen also swore that after he told GM he had taped his meeting with Danner in January, 1966, GM executives "changed the statements which they had drafted for presentation" to Ribicoff's subcommittee. He said the company deleted material that would have dissociated GM from the type of investigation Gillen had conducted, the detective swore.

Called "Smear" Attempt

At the hearing Ribicoff said



RALPH NADER
... "all facets" investigated

that "the whole investigation was to smear" Nader in whose life not "a damn thing" wrong had been found.

GM President James M. Roche, the company's principal witness at the hearing, publicly apologized to Nader, the young lawyer who wrote the book "Unsafe at Any Speed."

Roche testified under oath that the investigation was started, using the pretext of a "pre-employment" check, to find out what involvement Nader may have had in litigation concerning the 1960 through 1963 Chevrolet Corvairs.

Not Mentioned

In the court document, however, Gillen said that in a seven-page directive on the case by Danner there was "no mention" of the Corvair litigation.

Gillen said he was told to to cover "all facets of Nader's life. That included, he said, surveillance of Nader "wherever he might be found." Danner told him that he had GM's authorization for that surveillance, Gillen said.

Other Admissions

Other charges admitted by Gillen in his court document include these:

- GM had retained Gillen—directly, not through an intermediary—for at least 25 previous investigations made between 1959 and 1966. Among the persons he said he had investigated or had under surveillance were "a woman who claimed she had had an affair" with a GM official, a group seeking to improve job opportunities for Harlem Negroes, a famous entertainer, a civil rights worker and a labor arbitrator assigned to a case to which GM was a party.

- The assurance given by GM Chairman Frederick G. Donner to the annual stockholders at their annual meeting last May, that the investigation of Nader went beyond the intentions of Aloysius F. Power, GM's general counsel, "was untrue."

- Although Power had told Ribicoff that persons interviewed by Gillen's investigators had raised the issue of anti-Semitism, imputing it to Nader's family, the "anti-Semitic angle" actually originated in GM's legal department, which hoped "to discredit Ralph Nader in the eyes of

Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, who is Jewish."

- GM lawyer Murphy, a former Justice Department law librarian, asked Danner to try "to get Ralph Nader's Federal tax records from the Internal Revenue Service." The request was relayed by Danner, who like Gillen, is a former FBI agent, but Gillen refused because "this would be illegal."

- After Ribicoff said at an auto safety hearing held last Feb. 10 by his Senate Government Operations subcommittee, that he was then meeting Nader for the first time, Danner asked Gillen to check the statement—and Gillen did add to the scope of his inquiry "the question of the credibility of Senator Ribicoff" on that point.

- At a meeting in Detroit last March, GM attorney Nicholas J. Rosiello "attempted to convince Gillen" that if the subcommittee should ask if he had looked into Ribicoff's credibility, "he should deny that this subject was included in the investigation."

- In the few days preceding the March 22 Ribicoff hearing, GM's legal department asked Gillen to surrender his copy

of an exhibit—the "Dear Dick" letter from Eileen Murphy to Danner—so it "would not be available to the Ribicoff subcommittee."

- Some of Gillen's reports, which were given to Danner for forwarding to GM, indicated that persons his men had interviewed, already had been interviewed "about the same subject matter" by other investigators; and in meetings in Detroit—on March 12, 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20, 1966—employees of GM's legal staff expressed "their belief that one or more girls had been used in the investigation of Ralph Nader."

- At Danner's request, Gillen prepared a substitute first page for the report on his investigation of Nader. The substitute was forwarded by Danner to GM, which attached it to the copy of the report submitted to the subcommittee. The subcommittee was not told of the substitution, which was made because the original version reflected "the true purposes" of GM "to discredit him and shut him up."

- Just June 6, Theodore C. Sorensen, the top aid to President Kennedy who sat with GM President Roche as his counsel at the Ribicoff hearing, "told me [Gillen] he had . . . advised Roche in making his statement; that he had seen my report and had been informed at that time that I had a recording of Donner's instructions to me."